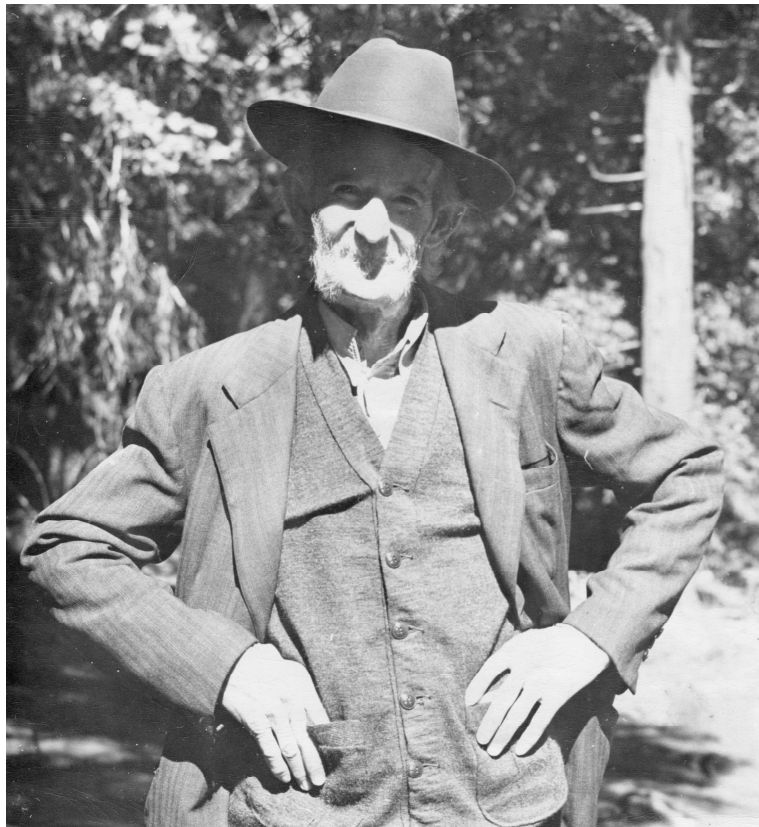


# **Plant Collecting Stories**

## **Robert Haley Asher**



**Robert Haley Asher, September 9, 1945**

Robert Haley Asher was born 28 March 1868, to Josephus Marion Asher, who was the first commercial nurseryman in the San Diego area, providing buyers with fruit trees, shrubs, and vines from his Fruit Vale ranch in Paradise Valley, National City. Robert Asher settled on Palomar Mountain in 1903, and ultimately had 160 acres, living in the Pauma Creek / State Park area. Robert Asher also lived off Palomar Mountain part of the year working as a nurseryman. On Palomar, Asher took and sold photographs of summer campers, trapped animals for pelts, collected and sold wild plants, picked apples, and worked odd jobs. Asher moved off Palomar Mountain in 1946 to his sister Mrs. Josephine A. Vacher's place on Fuerte Drive in El Cajon and continued to visit Palomar Mountain until 1951. Asher donated land to the Baptist Church in 1933, more land came along later from him, and this was the beginning of the present day Palomar Christian Conference Center. Asher passed away on 25 April 1953 at age 85.

These digitized pages are from the Robert Haley Asher papers (held by Peter Brueggeman). When Josephine Vacher's son vacated the family house in El Cajon, the family gave Robert Asher materials at that location to Peter, due to his Palomar Mountain history interests. Digitization of these materials and posting them to the Internet Archive is intended to enhance and preserve access to these materials.

Asher's Plant Collecting Stories pages are undated, and could be circa 1914. Pages are duplicated, with each page digitally enhanced to improve readability.

N.S. as the highest authority in the world on anything Pacific  
Pacific matters. His collection seems to be

①: Plant Collecting Service "Donaldson" "Highgate" Purdy  
— B I —

Ollie Donaldson Rob and Calochortis Cairns a egg-jacker

One evening on my return ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> a Lily scouting  
~~expedition~~ <sup>trip</sup> I found Donaldson and <sup>his</sup> two elderly

men ~~in~~ <sup>encamped</sup> near the Ranger Cabin  
in Lily Canyon. Donaldson ~~had~~ worked  
for Mr Carl Purdy for a number of years  
before he had settled down to gardening  
in Los Angeles City. I had never met  
Mr. Purdy and it may be imagined

that I was delighted to learn some-  
of his <sup>personalities</sup> from the lips of an <sup>old</sup> friend.  
Through an intimate like Mr.  
Donaldson, Carl Purdy is <sup>now</sup> the highest  
~~now~~ <sup>is</sup> well known in Europe as

U.S. as the <sup>highest</sup> authority in the world on Pacific  
Passes <sup>in the world on</sup> ~~this subject~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~He~~ <sup>was</sup>

was formerly a schoolmaster having  
taken up lull collecting as a profitable  
and interesting way of spending his  
~~vacations~~ <sup>vacations</sup>. Mr. Donaldson  
told me that ~~to~~ Mr. Purdy was the

(2) "squarest" man he <sup>had</sup> ever known. He told me that Carl Purdy resembled Abe Lincoln in another characteristic - Carl Purdy would never win a prize in a beauty show - unless it was the "booby" prize. ~~But~~ He was pure gold clear through, even if his hands were big as barn doors. ~~Mr. Purdy should chance to read these lines~~ But those hands belied their looks for they were quick as light. There? - I hope that will mollify Friend Purdy should he chance to peruse these lines. Donaldson told great stories about those hands - of the prodigious numbers of bulles they would ~~separate~~ ~~from~~ roll out of the ground in a day. Donaldson declared that ~~Purdy~~ <sup>day and away</sup> work as he would Purdy could still outdo him. And Donaldson was no slouch himself, as I found to my sorrow later. Up to that time I had supposed that I was some

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③ "potatoes" myself when 't came to  
digging Calochortus bulbs - but Donaldson  
could get out 1000 bulbs to my 600  
and ~~app~~ yet while doing it he would  
seem to be lounging along like the  
coyote in Mark Twain's tale - I  
was the dog straining every muscle  
in the vain attempt to keep up. Well,  
folks - or perhaps, I should say, "dear  
readers" - I do seem to wander away  
from the main subject at issue -  
guess it comes natural. "Be yourself"  
says the oracle to the ambitious  
young scribbler. "Be yourself" - so, if  
wandering comes easy, I guess that's  
what we shall ~~have~~ do henceforth to  
the end. If I were to attempt a really  
truly story of course it would be different.  
But this is a disjointed jumble of real  
happenings - happenings that happened  
happily or otherwise at various

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④ times during the passage of nearly twenty years - a <sup>lot</sup> ~~jumble~~ of literary(?) colibrestones bound ~~cemented~~ together into some fashion of possible comeliness by the means of a cement composed of philosophy ~~and various~~ other materials and nonsense, ~~and~~ preaching and rhapsodizing - a monument that will ~~perhaps~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> live on account of its very roughness and lack of polished form.

I enjoyed Donaldson even if he did so everlasting beat <sup>me</sup> on digging Calochortis Palmeri. "To know him was to love him" Not that he did not enjoy an occasional joke at my expense, however. My bargain with Pardy called for a compensation of \$3.50 per day and board - ~~to Donaldson~~ to board me. ~~I am very fond of~~ I like to have much for breakfast every day. Donaldson is Scotch. So I fancy that it did not offend his Scotch conscience to supply the passage at the proper intervals.

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⑤ "Oat-meal porridge is good for the  
brains ~~and good~~ <sup>also</sup> for the body". Likewise  
and this surely would appeal to any  
thrifty Scots love of economy - a  
meal composed mainly of oat-meal  
porridge could not cost very much.  
But there is a limit even to the  
amount of mush a boarder can  
get away with at a sitting and  
still <sup>prove</sup> be profitable as a boarder.  
I simply reveled in the Donaldson  
mush. Words fail me to describe  
it. It was simply wonderful. ~~Also~~  
The ~~amount~~ way my appetite  
grew was quite as wonderful.  
Something had to be done - or the  
bottom of the Donaldson schegues  
would blow up. At last a morning  
came along - beautiful as usual.  
I went down to Lily Creek to have ~~my~~  
mine alabaster brow. I remember as  
though it were yesterday, the little

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⑥ frog that leaped off a moss covered  
granite boulder <sup>persplashing into the creek.</sup> ~~and~~ ~~dashed~~ <sup>dashed</sup> into the creek. Heart  
free and care-free I ~~splattered~~ <sup>dashed</sup> the  
crystal water hither and yon in  
the very joy of living. Not a glimmer  
~~nor a~~ of impending doom was  
vouchsafed me. Like the lightning  
from ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> clear sky, or a thief in  
the night, or - or - you can think  
up the rest of 'em yourself -  
disaster came fast and furious -  
that's laying it on a bit too thick  
I'll admit - but what would you  
have said under the circumstances?  
It <sup>surely</sup> was a mighty mean trick to  
play on an innocent and confiding  
fellow collector. I'll pay a round  
silver dollar (Mex) to the first  
man - or suffragette, something -  
who can prove to my satisfaction

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⑦ in a poem of not exceeding 100 lines, that it was not a mean and dastardly trick. This offer holds good only until the 1st day of ~~July 1913~~ January 1915. That's the day the Panama-California Exposition opens in the city of San Diego, San Diego, the Athens of the West. San Diego by the Bay - the incomparable Bay of San Diego. Nothing like it, - before or after, an Exposition might in design and execution, an Exposition that's different. Ask Charley Collier. But to return to our knitting. "~~Robert~~" called ~~Donaldson~~

"Robert" called Donaldson as he came around the end of the tent skilled in hand.

"Present" I spluttered as I dashed a handful of water in the general direction of my friend the frog across

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⑧ the pool. That frog surely had a lot of nerve for his size. Think of him coming out on that little stone so soon after I had routed him from the mossy boulder! If I only had nerve like that -

"Hello-There! breakfast!" <sup>piped</sup> ~~yelled~~ Donald  
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"Hullo, yourself! Coming!" I replied  
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" Linctus - 25

1900  
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